

The Gospel of the Kingdom

Week 6 - Day 3: The Kingdom Authority of Jesus

Matthew 9:35-38 And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.”

In this study, we have been following the good news of God’s kingdom!

Up to this point God’s kingdom family has been suffering from the consequences of their choice to submit to the kingdom of Satan. This choice has caused God’s image-bearers to engage in rampant sin bringing hurt, suffering, pain, and ultimately death into the world. Because of sin, humanity was excluded from God’s kingdom space and all of creation waits to be restored.

The governing ruler of sin, Satan, and death over the hearts of humanity, however, could not withstand the power of God found in Jesus; the true ruler of all things!

Jesus made his kingdom authority over sin known by the power that he demonstrated. Luke, a physician in the business of physical ailments, documents how Jesus heals every kind disease and sickness and invites these people to become a part of God’s family.

Luke 4:40-41 Now when the sun was setting, all those who had any who were sick with various diseases brought them to him, and he laid his hands on every one of them and healed them. And demons also came out of many, crying, “You are the Son of God!”

Luke 7:22 And he answered them, “Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good news preached to them.

Mark had a vested interest in portraying Jesus’ kingship over all, including over his Roman context. John also documents Jesus’ works so that all people might believe. These two men recall Jesus’ power over the physical creation and the spiritual world.

Mark 2:5-7 And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven.” Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, “Why does this man speak like that? He is blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?”

John 6:9-11 “There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are they for so many?” Jesus said, “Have the people sit down.” Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, about five thousand in number. Jesus then took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated. So also the fish, as much as they wanted.

Finally, Matthew was interested in the deep Jewish roots of Jesus’ power in order to reveal that he was the long awaited Messiah.

Matthew 8:16-17 That evening they brought to him many who were oppressed by demons, and he cast out the spirits with a word and healed all who were sick. This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah: “He took our illnesses and bore our diseases.”

Matthew 17:2 And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light. And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him.

In these passages, we find Jesus restoring His Kingdom authority over all things that have been affected by sin!

However, if Jesus is God, then we should expect to see Jesus’ rule include more than just these wonderful miracles. Throughout the study, we have seen that God’s kingdom rule would restore the intimate and loving relationship humanity once experienced with God. Additionally, God’s rule included a new life-purpose for humans to spread God’s blessing and glory to all nations as His representative priests.

If you boil those two concepts down, humans were designed to love God and love their neighbors as a reflection of God’s rule! This is what Jesus was all about!

Matthew 22:36-40 “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. ⁴⁰ On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.”

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to be *empowered* by Jesus to love God and love your neighbors?

In the gospel accounts we learn that Jesus possessed the power to *perfectly* listen and obey the commands of God the Father. By obeying God’s commands, Jesus becomes the human being who would finally have the power to crush the temptations of the serpent:

Matthew 4:8-11 Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to him, “All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.” Then Jesus said to him, “Be gone, Satan! For it is written, “ ‘You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.’ ” Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him. “

Mark 14:8-6 And he said, “Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.”

John 5:19 So Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise.”

In the opening passage (Matt. 9:35-38), we also saw Jesus talking to his followers about the needs of the people with a high demand for workers. In this story, Jesus pours out his love and kindness by caring for all types of people, including the outcast.

John 13:5-7, 14-15 Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples’ feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, “Lord, do you wash my feet?” Jesus answered him, “What I am doing you do not understand now, but afterward you will understand... If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you.”

Furthermore, Jesus invites others to participate in his kingdom work and sets the example of a new and radical kind of love in His kingdom family!

Mark 10:43b - 45 ...But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be a slave of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

Jesus’ *humble* love for his brothers and sisters and his *perfect* obedience to his Heavenly Father would ultimately lead to death on a cross. In the ultimate act of love and obedience, Jesus offered his own body and blood as a sacrifice that would provide the spotless blood needed to *eternally* cover for our sins. His death would *permanently* take the place of our death caused by sin. Jesus’ ultimate act of power as king was one of humility, one where he would give up all power for the sake of **salvation** for His kingdom people rescuing them from the kingdom of the serpent. On the cross, we get the clearest picture of the type of King we serve! He would crush the head of the serpent, the serpent would bruise his heel...

John 15:13 Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.

Mark 8:31-33 And he began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed, and after three days rise again. And he said this plainly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But turning and seeing his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, “Get behind me, Satan! For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.

I often hear people asking the question, “What would God have me to do?” I think one thing that Jesus would have his followers do is to use his power in us to love one another and obey His commission to tell everyone about Jesus and his kingdom! Just as *Jesus had compassion on the people because they were distressed and downcast like sheep without a shepherd*, we ought to pray for compassion for those who are harassed, put down, living in poverty, marginalized, oppressed and on the fringes of life.

The same power that Jesus used to share his kingdom with others is available to believers today!

I also hear people say, “Some day I am going to tell people about Jesus and all that he can do.” The truth is that we don’t have to wait to tell people about Jesus because we have access to the same power and guidance of the Holy Spirit as Jesus did today.

Romans 8:11 But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

John 14:12 He that believes in me, the works I do, he shall do greater.

We will explore the Holy Spirit more in the next entry.

For now, it is wonderful to meditate on Jesus’ love and obedience. When Jesus was preaching and teaching and healing the sick, he also shared the good news of his kingdom. In the same way, the follower of Jesus has been given the power to make Jesus and his kingdom known through acts of love and through the good news of Jesus! Although we may not be able to calm a storm on the sea as Jesus did, we do have the power to calm an argument between our spouse and ourselves and even others. We may not be able to feed thousands of people with two fish and five loaves of bread as Jesus did, but we can find ways to feed, cloth and help those who are hungry, tired and in need. We may not be able to walk on water, but we can do things that we would not be able to do within our own strength!

-Vance Hunter

Share the Gospel: When Jesus walked the earth, he gave his followers a picture of what kingdom power looked like and how it can be used to love others and share the gospel of Jesus and his kingdom. Moreover, just as Jesus delegated his kingdom power to his followers over 2000 years ago, he has delegated his power to his followers today. Let's be encouraged to use the power that Jesus has given us to go out and share the love of God and the good news of his kingdom with everyone.

Personal Observations, Reflections, and Prayers: